



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Patent Application of) Group Art Unit: 3731
Yukitoshi Kato) Examiner: V. Nguyen
Application No.: 09/993,633) Confirmation No.: 8228
Filed: November 27, 2001)
For: INSTRUMENT FOR)
EXTROVERTING BLOOD VESSELS)
)

COMMENTS ON STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

An Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance accompanied the Notice of Allowability issued in connection with the above-identified application. The Statement points out that the prior art fails to disclose or suggest the subject matter recited in independent Claims 21, 22, 25 and 27, and then goes on to reference various features. The referenced features are similar in many respects to some of the features recited in independent Claim 21. However, the referenced features are not set forth in the other independent claims.

For example, the Statement refers to the contact portion in the form of a substantially circular ring whereas independent Claim 22 recites that the contact portion is in the form of a substantially annular ring. In addition, the Statement mentions that the diameter of the ring portion is changeable by changing the distance between the distal ends of the pair of arms, whereas independent Claim 22

recites that the outer circumference of the ring portion is changeable by changing the distance between the distal ends of the pair of arms.

Further, the Statement refers to the ring portion being insertable into the blood vessel through the opening of the end of the blood vessel while being maintained in a reduced diameter state, with the diameter of the ring portion being adapted to be increased whereby the end of the blood vessel is expanded or reversed by operating the operating mechanism. Claim 22 does not set forth such language, but rather recites that the operating mechanism changes the outer circumference defined by the contact portion between a relatively smaller outer circumference permitting the contact portion to be introduced into the inside of the end of the blood vessel and a relatively larger outer circumference after the contact portion has been introduced into the inside of the blood vessel to permit the blood vessel to be turned inside out.

The comments in the Statement are also not consistent with the wording in independent Claim 25. This claim recites the annular ring portion that is formed of a wire-like member and that is positionable inside the blood vessel and adapted to be brought into contact with the inside of the end of the blood vessel, and the supporting portion on which the ring portion is supported, with the supporting portion comprising a tubular insertion portion. Claim 25 goes on to recite that a portion of the wire-like member forming the ring portion extends into the tubular portion and is connected to a slider portion movable relative to the insertion portion to adjust the outer circumference of the ring portion between a relatively smaller outer circumference permitting the ring portion to be introduced into the inside of the end of the blood vessel and a relatively larger outer circumference after the ring portion has been

introduced into the inside of the blood vessel to permit the blood vessel to be turned inside out.

Lastly, the comments in the Statement are also not consistent with independent Claim 27. This is a method claim directed to a method of turning an end of a blood vessel inside out that involves positioning an annular ring portion inside the end portion of the blood vessel while the ring portion is in a relatively smaller outer circumference state, with the ring portion being expandable to a relatively larger outer circumference state, expanding the outer circumference of the ring portion to the relatively larger outer circumference state while the ring portion is positioned inside the end portion of the blood vessel to outwardly expand at least a part of the end portion of the blood vessel, and turning the end portion of the blood vessel inside out.

In light of the forgoing, it is understood that the comments in the Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance were merely intended to summarize some of the features recited in independent Claim 21, and were not intended to imply that all of the other allowed independent claims in this application include the referenced features. Applicant submits that the Statement should not be interpreted to mean that the allowed claims in this application recite anything different than that which the claims themselves recite.

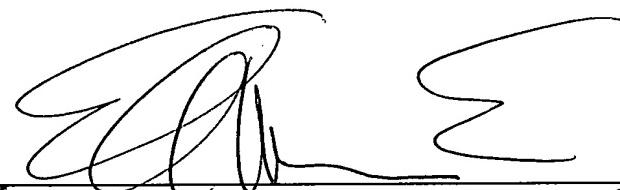
Should the Examiner disagree in any way with the comments set forth above,
the undersigned respectfully requests that he be contacted or notified in writing.

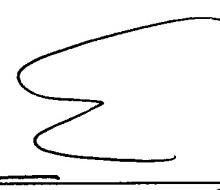
Respectfully submitted,

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Date: May 27, 2005

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